

PRESS RELEASE

Croatian Medical Journal
Zagreb University School of Medicine
Šalata 3b
10000 Zagreb
Croatia
Phone: ++385-1-4590-254
Fax: ++385-1-4590-222

Mail: dario.sambunjak@mef.hr

All articles published in the Croatian Medical Journal
are freely available at www.cmj.hr

Ambrosia elatior established as a cause of allergic rhinitis and asthma in Southern Croatia

ZAGREB – Pollen of *Ambrosia elatior* is widespread in Splitsko-Dalmatinska County and is responsible for a significant proportion of seasonal allergies in southern Croatia, although it was not expected that the pollen is present in this region in clinically relevant concentrations. A new study published in *Croatian Medical Journal* suggests that the pollen of *A. elatior* should be included in the routine diagnostic set of inhaled allergens in southern Croatia.

A. elatior is short ragweed which produces highly allergenic pollen, which has already been confirmed in clinically relevant concentrations in northern Croatia. New study conducted in Splitsko-Dalmatinska County showed that in a sample of 320 outpatients who experienced seasonal symptoms of rhinitis and/or asthma, 56 (17,5%) had a positive skin prick test and increased specific IgE to *A. elatior*. These patients were followed-up during the 9 weeks of pollination season (mid-August to mid-October) to explore the possible cause-and-effect connection between pollen count and clinical symptoms in sensitized persons.

A. elatior pollen proportion in total weekly pollen counts peaked in the third and fourth week of pollination. At the same time, the study participants suffered the most from the symptoms of allergic rhinitis and asthma, and used the anti-allergic therapy most frequently. The analysis of ventilatory parameters in patients showed a significant differences between the

beginning (first week) and peak (third week) of the pollen season. Eosinophil count in peripheral blood of all patients was significantly higher in the third week of pollination, which is also a sign of an allergic reaction to *A. elatior*.

In the conclusion, the authors suggest that measures for controlling the growth and spread of *A. elatior* should be introduced also in southern Croatia.

Corresponding author:

Božica Kanceljak-Macan

Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health

P.O. BOX 291,

10001 Zagreb

Croatia

bkancelj@imi.hr